

We claim:

- 1           1. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub
- 2       100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices, for use
- 3       in the manufacturing of commercial and military semiconductor
- 4       devices used in phased array radar, missile seeking devices,
- 5       direct broadcast satellite television receivers, wide band
- 6       wireless systems, global positioning satellite receivers and
- 7       cellular telephones, and other equipment said method comprising
- 8       the steps of:
- 9           providing for the use and development of horizontal
- 10      beams from a synchrotron or point source of x-ray beams;
- 11           preparing of submicrometer, transverse horizontal and
- 12      vertical stepper stages and frames;
- 13           providing a stepper base frame for the proper housing
- 14      and mating of the x-ray beam;
- 15           minimizing the effects of temperature and airflow
- 16      control by means of an environmental chamber;
- 17           transporting, handling and prealigning wafers and
- 18      other similar items for tight process control;
- 19           improving the control and sensing of positional
- 20      accuracy through the use of differential variable reluctance
- 21      transducers;
- 22           controlling the continuous gap and all six degrees of
- 23      freedom of the wafer being treated with a multiple variable stage
- 24      control;
- 25           incorporating alignment systems using unambiguous
- 26      targets to provide data to align one level to the next;
- 27           using beam transport, shaping or shaping devices to
- 28      include x-ray point sources;

29 using an inline collimator or concentrator for  
30 collimating or concentrating the x-ray beams; and  
31 imaging the mask pattern at the precise moment for  
32 optimum effectiveness.

1 2. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2 100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3 according to claim 1, wherein:  
4 said using and developing of horizontal beams from a  
5 synchrotron or point source of x-ray beams step comprises the use  
6 of a beamline in parallel with the z axis.

1 3. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2 100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3 according to claim 1, wherein:  
4 said preparing of submicrometer, transverse  
5 horizontal and vertical stepper stages and frames step comprises  
6 providing a light weight, honeycomb structure;  
7 said preparing of submicrometer, transverse  
8 horizontal and vertical stepper stages and frames step further  
9 comprises providing a air or gaseous bearing;  
10 said preparing of submicrometer, transverse  
11 horizontal and vertical stepper stages and frames step further  
12 comprises providing vacuum clamping and mating surfaces;  
13 said preparing of submicrometer, transverse  
14 horizontal and vertical stepper stages and frames step further  
15 comprises providing active weight compensation;  
16 said preparing of submicrometer, transverse  
17 horizontal and vertical stepper stages and frames step further  
18 comprises linear actuators; and  
19 said preparing of submicrometer, transverse  
20 horizontal and vertical stepper stages and frames step further



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1           8. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2 100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3 according to claim 1, wherein:  
4           said improving the control and sensing of positional  
5 accuracy through the use of differential variable reluctance  
6 transducers step comprises providing positional feedback of the  
7 six degrees of freedom alignment stage.

1           9. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2 100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3 according to claim 1, wherein;  
4           said controlling the continuous gap and all six  
5 degrees of freedom of the wafer being treated with a multiple  
6 variable stage control step comprises using a device having a  
7 cross coupled gantry design.

1           10. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2 100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3 according to claim 1, wherein:  
4           said incorporating alignment systems using  
5 unambiguous targets to provide data to align one level to the  
6 next level step comprises using multiple bright field optical  
7 microscopes in order to provide x, y and z, magnification and  
8 rotational data; and  
9           said incorporating alignment systems using  
10 unambiguous targets to provide data to align one level to the  
11 next level step further comprises using an additional imaging  
12 broad band interferometer alignment system for providing precise  
13 alignment of wafer levels and gap controls during x-ray exposure  
14 and imaging.